

CONVERSATIONS IT IS WORTH HAVING (Part Three) By Marlene and Bob Neufeld

Today, we would like to continue to explore conversations it is worth having.

- 8. Learning:** A useful attitude you can take is to be open to learning from any interaction. For more about this see our article “Be Open to Learning”. When you hit a “speedbump” in your relationship journey, begin to genuinely wonder, “What can I learn from this?” focusing on the dynamics/patterns at play behind events, as well as your own role in them. Once you have a sense of what you can learn or are learning, share it with whoever else is involved. Also share whatever action steps you plan to take to implement your learning.
- 9. Shifting from “you” or “we” to “I”:** Shifting your focus from what the other person is doing to what you are doing is a magical move. Acknowledging this to the other person can bring about big changes in your relationship. People in our office often use “we” to mean the other person, as in “we need to learn to communicate better”. This sort of indirect communication does not help, and is just indirect blame.
- 10. Having fun, taking yourself lightly, laughing at yourself:** Some people use humor to avoid something, or as an indirect way of blaming someone (e.g. using sarcasm and then denying you really meant it by saying “I was just joking”). Genuine humor can be very helpful in loosening the grip that an issue has on you and in lightening the mood between you. For more about this topic, see our article “How to Take Yourself Lightly”.
- 11. Generating curiosity and wonder:** It is especially helpful to generate curiosity about what **you** are doing; when you try to generate curiosity about your partner it can be heard as indirect blame. A helpful way to generate wonder is to create a long-lasting hmmm in your throat and chest. Here are some examples of useful wonder questions:
 - Hmmm, I wonder how the way I’m looking at this situation may be keeping it from changing in a positive direction.
 - Hmmm, I wonder how my old unconscious beliefs may be keeping me from a positive solution.
 - Hmmm, I wonder how this situation might change if I weren’t so committed to being right?
 - Hmmm, I wonder how I could see you as my ally and be your ally.

Next month we plan to explore why people insist on having the conversations that aren’t worth having.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. To learn more, see www.marleneandbob.com or call 613-594-9248 to arrange a complimentary 1-hour introductory session. For articles mentioned above see www.marleneandbob.com/articles.htm.